

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An image processing device, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data;
and

~~a plurality of one or more~~ image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, ~~characterized in that:~~

wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify security levels of the second image data processing means to which the image data processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of image data in addition to ~~an~~ the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The image processing device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to select, from among the plurality of image data processing means, all other image data processing means whose security level is equal to or higher than the security level of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, and a function to request the selected second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of the image data.

Claim 3 (currently amended): An image processing device, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data;
and

an image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, ~~characterized in that:~~

wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify a security level of ~~a~~ the second image data processing means to which the image data processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of the image data in place of ~~an~~ the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data if the first image data processing means can no longer continue processing subsequent part of the image data.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The image processing device according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to select, from among the plurality of image data processing means, all other image data processing means whose security level is equal to or higher than the security level of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, and a function to request the selected second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of subsequent part of the image data.

Claim 5 (currently amended): An image processing system, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data; and

an image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, where the image processing system distributes image data received from the image data processing requesting means to the second image data processing means available for distributed processing in addition to ~~an~~ the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, ~~characterized in that:~~ wherein

the data processing requesting means have a function to verify security levels of the second image data processing means to which the image data distributed processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform distributed processing of the image data; and

the second image data processing means have a function to perform distributed processing of the image data in conjunction with the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.

Claim 6 (currently amended): An image processing system, comprising:

a plurality of image data processing means including at least first and second image data processing means which have different security levels and which process inputted image data; and

image data processing requesting means which request any of the image data processing means to process image data, where the image processing system alternated processes image data inputted by the image data processing requesting means to ~~a~~the second image data processing means available for alternate processing in place of ~~an~~the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data, ~~characterized in that:~~

wherein the image data processing requesting means have a function to verify a security level of the second image data processing means to which the image data alternate processing is to be requested and then request the second image data processing means to perform alternate processing of the inputted image data if the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data can no longer continue processing subsequent part of the image data; and

the second image data processing means has a function to perform alternate processing of the subsequent part of the image data in place of the first image data processing means that is first requested to process the image data.